

NEW HOMES

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Pottinger makes people at home in the country

After rush-hour driving in Tucson's city traffic, many people yearn to get home to the quiet, pristine beauty of grasslands, cottonwood trees and rolling hills. But is building a custom dream home an hour away from work and the amenities of city life the right choice? What are the realities of country living near Tucson? Scott Pottinger has made it his life's work guiding people through those very questions and making their country dream homes a reality.

A native Arizonan, Pottinger started his business in 1980 and has been building custom homes since 1982. Scott Pottinger Custom Homes Inc, has flourished in the home building business in a variety of Arizona locations from Phoenix to Nogales. Pottinger, who also has a degree in criminal justice from Arizona State University, has gravitated to home construction and finds that custom home building is truly his "niche."

A licensed contractor and a Southern Arizona Home Builders Association member, Pottinger is currently building three to four homes a year in the more rural areas south of Tucson, including Patagonia, Sonoita and Tubac. His clients, who come to him mostly by referral, are anxious to get out of the city and enjoy life at a slower pace, but not necessarily leave the city totally behind. There are many younger people who want the best of both worlds.

"I've noticed a big surge lately of people coming out to those areas and a lot of them are still working in Tucson, or they are coming in from California or other places and wanting to live close to a big city, but not right in it," Pottinger said.

Choosing a more rural location to build a custom home requires special consideration, according to Pottinger. There are tradeoffs to living in the serene beauty of remote areas. The drive to work can be longer and more tedious, and urban services are farther away.

The biggest complaint Pottinger said he has heard is that people wish they could spend more time in their home. They love that peaceful environment and the country settings.

Still, Pottinger has to make perspective clients aware of the realities of living away from the amenities of city life. He considers that part of the responsibility of his job. "Ninety percent of the homes I build have wells and you have to figure that into your budget. The other thing is that most of them have septic systems and therefore you usually have to get a 'perc test' and the sale of the property is contingent on this test. Also, a lot of times we have to bring the power in and that can be costly."

Despite the realities, Scott Pottinger Custom Homes is continuing to draw customers craving the quiet. The average custom home Pottinger's company builds is around 3,500 square feet, but his cur-

rent project will be the biggest yet, a 13,000-square-foot home near Tubac. The home will be a "showcase" contemporary Southwest design.

"It's going to be a very state-of-the-art project. I'm really excited about it and everything is being done on the most professional level," Pottinger said.

Every home built by Scott Pottinger Custom Homes is of the same high-quality standard. Pottinger accepts nothing less from the team of craftsmen he hires, and he is present on the job sites to ensure this. He obtains the finest work force available for high quality work. If he can't, he'll wait until he can.

"I get the best I can, or work stops! The customers know this," Pottinger said.

Pottinger's first concern is building a close relationship with clients.

"I really care about how the customer feels about the home when it is finished, and I want them to be very satisfied with it," he said.

But so often, Pottinger noted, people don't know where to begin. They don't have a home site, or even an idea of what they want. "We'll go ahead and take them through the whole process," he said. "That is very gratifying and that can be a lot of fun."

Although Pottinger's company subcontracts most of the work that goes into building a home, customer satisfaction is a priority.

"We try to match the customer's personality with somebody we feel they will be comfortable with," he said. Pottinger also searches for the best professionals for the individual home design. "Some architects and designers are better at some designs than others," he said.

Making sure the client feels at ease during the entire building process is paramount to Pottinger and wife, Kate, who steps in to help establish a rapport with clients and give them expert personal attention.

With a background in marketing and interior design and a business degree from Western International University in Phoenix, she helps clients make decisions and provides personal communication during the process.

"My wife, Kate, can assist the people on all of these overwhelming decisions they are hit with in the beginning," Pottinger said. "They (clients) have to do it in a timely manner and not everybody has



Photo by BRETT DRURY

their homework done when we start a project."

Pottinger emphasized that working with his wife has added a new dimension to the company.

"She is assisting customers with colorization, selection of appliances, paint colors, floor coverings and this allows me to spend my time on getting the job up, constructed and keeping the subcontractors and suppliers focused on that part of it...It's a team effort," he said.

Pottinger's clients more often than not have become friends. Seeing them years later enjoying their homes that he built is extremely gratifying for Pottinger.

"Sometimes I'll go back ten years later," Pottinger said. "I'll stop by for a visit because some of these relationships last a long time."

Written by ELIZABETH MADRID MCKINDLEY, a Tucson freelance writer